



# Priority Investment Act 10

Establishment of the Priority Investment Chapter results from the passage of the 2007 Priority Investment Act. The Priority Investment Chapter addresses the likely federal, state, and local funds available for public infrastructure and facilities during the next ten years, and recommends the projects for expenditure of those funds during the next ten years for needed public infrastructure and facilities such as water, sewer, roads, and schools.

Planning for public expenditure on infrastructure projects must be carried out through coordination with adjacent and relevant jurisdictions and agencies. Coordination is required between counties, municipalities, public service districts, school districts, public and private utilities, transportation agencies, and other public entities that are affected by or have planning authority over the public project.

## Vision

*We share a commitment with our neighboring jurisdictions and agencies to work together to plan and construct the public infrastructure needed by the residents of Bluffton and Beaufort County.*

## 10.1 Capital Improvement Program

Bluffton's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) identifies, plans and constructs public infrastructure. By providing adequate community facilities and services, growth and development can be sustained within Bluffton. Therefore, careful infrastructure planning is a key component in implementing long-range goals and objectives. The best approach in planning for community facilities lies in managing public investment in infrastructure wisely. Through the identification and prioritization of community facility needs, Bluffton can work toward meeting both existing deficiencies and long-term demands in a timely and efficient manner. To accomplish this, Bluffton has developed a Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

The CIP includes the planning and prioritizing of capital projects within a six-year plan (FY 2006-2012). Bluffton's CIP project list is dynamic and may change throughout the six-year timeframe. Significant intergovernmental cooperation has occurred to plan for capital projects. Projects are prioritized within the seven categories listed below.

- Roadways
- Pathways
- Drainage improvements
- Parks
- Land Acquisition
- Facilities
- Planning Initiatives

CIP projects are funded primarily through Bluffton's Community Infrastructure Bank (CIB). Another funding source is the General Fund. While some projects may be paid for exclusively by Bluffton, other methods for funding include:

**Grant Matching:** Bluffton can use CIB or General Funds as match funding for grant opportunities.

**Partnerships:** Bluffton can partner with other entities, such as Beaufort County, to jointly fund capital projects that benefit Bluffton, as well as Southern Beaufort County as a whole.

Through the CIP, accomplishments have been achieved during CIB capital project planning. The Town has implemented a monthly program for reporting project status. Summary level project tracking and cash flow for all CIP projects has been established, as well as standard project filing.

Recommended public infrastructure projects such as water, sewer, roads, pathways and facilities is detailed in the CIP program. Below please find a list of capital improvement projects contemplated through fiscal year 2019. For additional detail on the capital improvement projects including general descriptions, associated Comprehensive Plan goals, costs and funding, please refer to the Technical Appendix.

1. Pathways
  - a. General
  - b. Buck Island Simmonsville Road
2. Sewer and Water
  - a. Buck Island Simmonsville Road
  - b. Jason-Able
  - c. General
3. Roadway
  - a. May River/Bruin Road Streetscape
  - b. Bluffton Parkway Phase 5B
4. Old Town
  - a. Calhoun Street
  - b. Old Town Streetscape, Lighting and Parking
5. Park Development
  - a. General Improvements
  - b. Oyster Factory Park
6. Town Facilities
  - a. Buckwalter Place Tech Park Infrastructure
  - b. Town Hall and Municipal Court

Capital Improvement Program		
<b>Need:</b> Completion of capital improvement projects to meet the needs of an increasing population.		
<b>Goal:</b> Plan, secure funds and complete major roadway, pathway, drainage, park, land acquisition and facility projects.		
Implementation Steps	Responsible Parties	Time Frame
1. Complete all capital projects at or under budget.	Engineering	On-going
2. Continue partnerships to jointly fund projects.	Engineering	On-going
3. Maximize leveraging of available funds.	Engineering	On-going
4. Complete the Tech Park to support Care Core occupancy.	Engineering	Short
5. Finalize capital project processes and procedures.	Engineering, Finance	Short
6. Establish project financial reporting and tracking with the Finance Department to improve accuracy, control and predictability	Engineering, Finance	Short

## 10.2 Official Map

The Official Map is a tool to help implement the Comprehensive Plan. During the Comprehensive Planning process and other Bluffton efforts, ROWs and other public uses have been discussed and potential locations for public infrastructure have been identified. The Official Map is a tool to reserve future locations of existing or proposed public street, highway, and public utility rights-of-way, public building sites (where a building is to be constructed for public use with public funds) and public open spaces.

Adoption of the Comprehensive Plan is the primary prerequisite for creating and adopting an Official Map. Bluffton must adopt the Comprehensive Plan or at least the transportation element before showing the exact locations of new, extended, widened and otherwise improved streets and highways on an Official Map. Adoption the full Comprehensive Plan is essential before mapping the future locations of:

- Public buildings
- Public parks
- Public playgrounds
- Public utilities
- Public open spaces

Adoption of the Official Map gives Bluffton the opportunity to acquire property needed for public purposes before the owner changes the land use or develops the property in such a way as to make impractical its future acquisition for public use. Once locations for public use are identified on the map and the adoption process is carried out, permits cannot be issued for construction, improvement, repair or moving of any building or structure on the reserved property. Permits cannot be issued for any change in land use on property reserved on the Official Map. However, property owners have the right to an appeal process or file for exemption from Official Map restrictions.

Given the complex nature of the Official Map, the process will require coordination between all Bluffton departments, as well as:

- County Departments (Planning, Engineering, Rural and Critical Lands Board, Law Enforcement, PALS, Libraries, etc)
- SCDOT
- Bluffton Township Fire District
- BJWSA
- SCE&G
- Palmetto Electric
- Beaufort County School Board

The Comprehensive Plan addresses issues such as the future planning and locations of schools, libraries, police stations, fire stations, etc, but does not address specific locations. The plan presents ideas for coordination of efforts through co-location, partnerships and coordinated planning. A coordinated approach is will be required to reserve properties during the Official Map creation process.

It is Bluffton's intention to create an Official Map, and update/revise it as necessary, to reserve lands for public use as identified in this plan. It is also Bluffton's intention to jointly establish the map while formally including the Town of Hilton Head Island and Beaufort County in the process. The end result will be one map that is adopted by all participating jurisdictions. While a coordinated approach is already recommended, a Joint Official Map would allow for an effective, efficient and financially and politically feasible planning and adoption process. It is Bluffton's intention to partner with adjacent jurisdictions to encourage co-location, coordination and healthy inter-governmental relationships.

Official Map		
<b>Need:</b> Reserved land for public infrastructure and community facilities.		
<b>Goal:</b> Reserve future locations of existing or proposed public street, highway, and public utility rights-of-way, public building sites (where a building is to be constructed for public use with public funds) and public open spaces.		
Implementation Steps	Responsible Parties	Time Frame
1. Establish a Joint Official Map.	Administration, Planning, Engineering, Beaufort County, Town of Hilton Head	Medium

### 10.3 Priority Investment Zone

Through the Priority Investment Act, Bluffton is able to adopt priority investment zones in which the governing authority adopts market based incentives or relaxes or eliminates certain housing regulatory requirements, to encourage private development in the priority investment zone. Bluffton also may provide that traditional neighborhood design and affordable housing must be permitted within the priority investment zone. Traditional neighborhood design means development designs are intended to enhance the appearance and functionality of the new development so that it functions like a traditional neighborhood or town. These designs make possible reasonably high residential densities, a mixture of residential and commercial land uses, a range of single and multi-family housing types, and street connectivity both within the new development and to surrounding roadways, pedestrian, and bicycle features. Bluffton will study the feasibility and benefits of establishing Priority Investment Zones within municipal limits, especially in regard to the provision of affordable housing.

Priority Investment Zones		
<b>Need:</b> Designation of areas for affordable housing efforts and private development and investment.		
<b>Goal:</b> Designate areas for affordable housing. Designate areas for private development and investment to strengthen Bluffton's economy.		
Implementation Steps	Responsible Parties	Time Frame
1. Establish Priority Investment Zone(s)	Administration, Planning, Engineering	Medium

## 10.4 Communication and Coordination

Communication and coordination will be required to plan for public infrastructure improvements. Coordination means written notification by the planning commission or staff to adjacent and relevant jurisdictions and agencies of the proposed projects and the opportunity to provide comment concerning the proposed projects. Bluffton, Beaufort County, and Hilton Head Island officials frequently meet to implement the Southern Beaufort County Regional Plan. Elected officials within the Southern Beaufort County Implementation Committee, as well as staff coordination through working groups have already begun the process of joint review of projects of regional significance. It is the intention of the Bluffton to expand the effort to include joint review of all public infrastructure projects and CIPs. Appropriate agencies and adjacent jurisdictions will be involved in this process.

Communication and Coordination		
<b>Need:</b> Communication and coordination between multiple jurisdictions during infrastructure planning and development.		
<b>Goal:</b> Establish a coordinated approach to public infrastructure planning		
Implementation Steps	Responsible Parties	Time Frame
1. Coordinate multi-jurisdiction review meetings to review projects of regional significance. Use the Southern Beaufort County Implementation Committee to implement this effort.	Town Council, Administration, Planning, Engineering, Environmental Protection, Beaufort County Planning, Town of Hilton Head Planning.	On-going



## 10.5 Funding for Public Infrastructure

There are federal, state and local funds available for public infrastructure and facilities. These sources, as well as other potential sources, will be examined to fund public infrastructure projects within Bluffton.

Federal funds are available for Bluffton's infrastructure. Congressional earmarks through adopted amendments to federal legislation are available for transportation system improvements. The Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) is a flexible federal program that provides communities with resources to address a wide range of unique community development needs. The CDBG program provides annual grants on a formula basis to 1,180 general units of local government and States.

Several state funding sources for public infrastructure also exist. Through SCDOT, the county receives funds from the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program funds for roads. Parks, Recreation and Tourism (PRT) grant funds are available to Beaufort County and Bluffton which can be used for parks, public facilities and infrastructure. Each municipality also receives an allotment of these funds based on population.

Local opportunity for public infrastructure exists through impact fees, sales tax, hospitality tax, accommodation tax, developer fees, property tax and tax increment financing. There are county impact fees charges on buildings permitted in the counties and municipalities for roads, libraries and parks. The county has also enacted a 1% capital projects sales tax for infrastructure. Local hospitality and accommodations tax, and a state accommodation tax are used for tourism related capital projects. Developer fees and land set aside for parks and infrastructure are available to local governments. Property tax revenue is a major factor for schools and local government. Other funding methods for funding include Tax Incremental Financing, Municipal Improvement District Funding and Assessment Districts.

Funding for Public Infrastructure		
<b>Need:</b> Sufficient funding for adequate public infrastructure.		
<b>Goal:</b> Fund infrastructure improvement and construction needs identified through the capital improvement planning.		
Implementation Steps	Responsible Parties	Time Frame
1. Identify and assess federal, state and local funding sources for public infrastructure. Secure funding for public infrastructure.	Administration, Finance, Planning, Engineering, Environmental Protection	Ongoing